

DCS SORTIE STARTER

USER GUIDE

Pick a map, an era, and an aircraft — fly a living world in minutes.

Airfields dressed. SAMs up. The strike group at sea. Your flight plan stays yours.

VERSION 1.105.0

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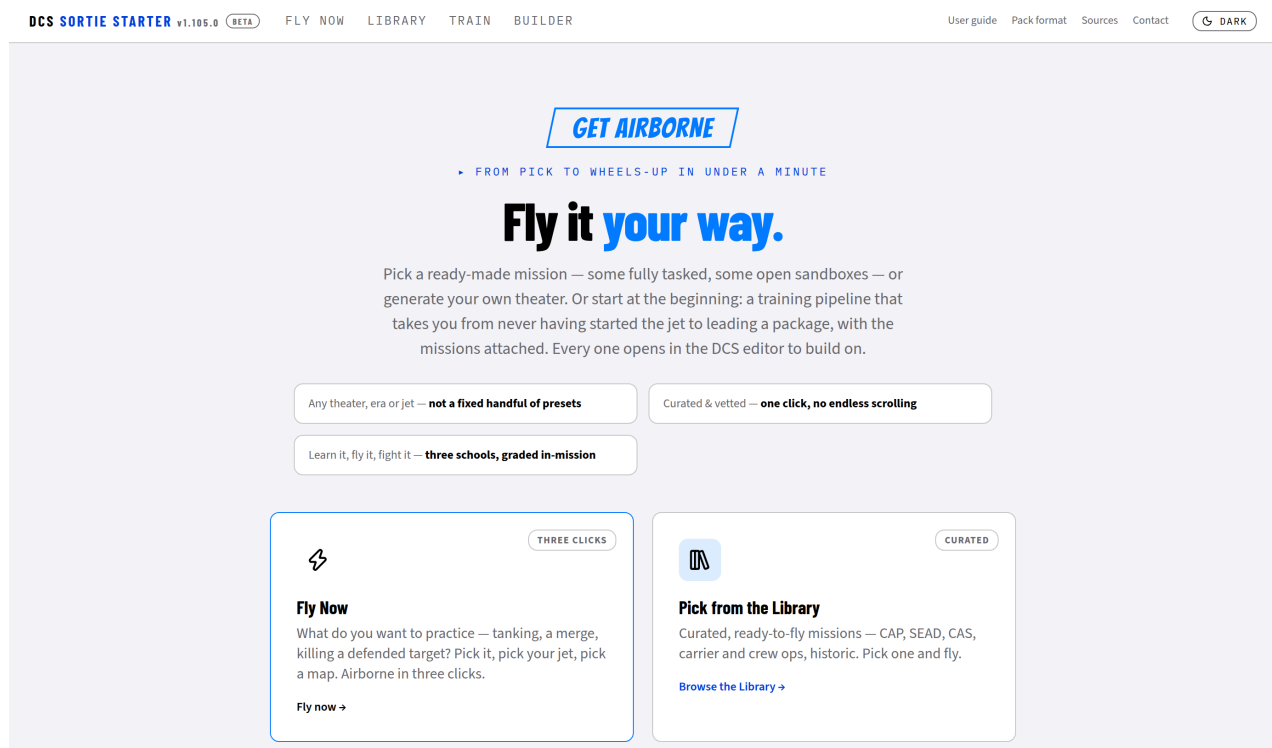
Welcome aboard

Select, don't search. The DCS Sortie Starter builds a living world for you: airfields dressed with period-correct aircraft and equipment, working SAM sites, support flights on station, and a carrier strike group with a properly spotted deck. You download a ready **.miz** file and build your mission on top in the DCS Mission Editor.

We set the stage — you write the play. Waypoints appear only where a routed strike is the mission (the strike templates and Fly Now's target missions) — everywhere else, flight planning is yours.

The four doors

Fly Now — the fastest path. One screen, three picks: what do you want to practice (Tanker Time, BFM Merge, Kill the Guns, Beat the SAM), in what, and where. Era, base, weather and comms are derived for you; one "spice" notch sets the opposition and the re-roll button rerolls a fresh layout of the same picks. Tanker Time and the BFM Merge start you **airborne** — at FL200 behind the tanker, or two miles abeam your adversary.



Fly Now: mission, jet, map — airborne in three clicks.

Library — curated, ready-to-fly missions across eras, roles and crews, including the routed Cold War gun-belt strike pack. **Builder** — the full wizard below, every dial exposed.

Train — the Training Pipeline. Learn it, fly it, fight it. Three schools in the order every air force runs them. Ground School and UPT teaches you to fly an airplane (formation, timing, the tanker — in any jet); FRS — Know Your Jet teaches you this one, from a history chapter through the contact phase, systems, the squadron's tactical checkout and weapons to a check ride; MQT — Fight the Jet is employment. Every ride is a generated Library mission with its brief and kneeboard, graded in-mission where the Mission Editor can see you. Units not built yet are shown as planned, with the reason. Your record lives in your browser; a squadron takes the kit — printed program, gradesheet, readings. The first course is the F-4E Phantom II.

Your Mission Kit

Every generate ends with the **Mission Kit**: the .miz with its install path, the **briefing pack** (SITUATION/MISSION/EXECUTION brief, theater chart with the numbered threat order of battle, comms card with diverts and fuel boxes — PDF + Markdown), the **kneeboard** already riding in the jet (RShift+K), the loaded flight plan on routed missions, and the DTC card for the F-14B(U).

The comms card carries **JOKER and BINGO** already filled in — computed from your airframe's internal fuel (50% and 33%), in pounds and kilos. The boxes stay boxes, so grease-pencil over them when your loadout or route says otherwise.

The screenshot shows a dark-themed interface with three items listed:

- caucasus_modern_F_4E_45MC_qf_guns_4205.miz**: Single-player. Install path: Saved Games\DCS\Missions — then Mission → fly. Status: DOWNLOADED ✓
- Briefing pack — PDF + Markdown**: The full mission brief as documents: situation, comms & TACAN card, threat picture. Print it or second-screen it. Status: Download button.
- Kneeboard — 3 pages, already in the jet**: Comms card, airfield data and theater chart. In the cockpit: RShift+K, [] to flip pages. Status: IN THE .MIZ ✓

The Mission Kit: every document the engine built, by name.

Training — the AWI syllabus

The Library's **Training** tab carries **AWI Basics**: twelve F-14B(U) all-weather intercept events derived from CNATRA P-825, the Navy's own intercept syllabus. Cold start at Nellis, real NTTR range points (SHEEP · ALAMO · FLEX), and weather that thickens as the syllabus progresses — the four target-aspect game plans, a night displacement turn, the weapons-live timeline, aware and unaware bandits, the banzai/skate decision, two section events, and a graduating self-escort strike. Every event ships with its printed brief; the card's **Download complete syllabus** button hands you all twelve missions and their documents at once. These are curated fixed missions — exact training geometry, not generated — so fly them in order. Needs the F-14A/B and F-14B(U) modules and the Nevada terrain.

The screenshot shows the 'Mission Library' interface with the 'Training' tab selected. The 'AWI Basics' card is highlighted, showing details about the intercept syllabus and a list of twelve events.

AWI Basics

The complete intercept syllabus from CNATRA P-825, flown as twelve graded events: the four target-aspect game plans, a night displacement turn, the weapons-live timeline, aware/unaware bandits, the banzai/skate decision, two section events, and a graduating self-escort strike. Cold start at Nellis, real range points, weather that progresses with the syllabus, printed brief for every event.

Aircraft: your pick SP Threat IIII

ERA: Modern (2000s+)

WHAT'S SET UP FOR YOU

- ✓ Doctrinal SAM/air threats tuned to the difficulty
- ✓ Tanker on station with TACAN / frequency
- ✓ Bullseye, nav references and F10 map overlays
- ✓ Opens in the DCS editor — tweak anything after

Download complete syllabus (.zip) In-flight guide Read me first

THE TWELVE EVENTS — FLY THEM IN ORDER

Event	Description	File	Brief
01	Radar Mechanics & VID of an Unknown First contact: run the radar, build the picture, and put eyes on an unknown — 15 TA rig...	.miz	brief
02	Low TA — Kick and Build The first of the four P-825 game plans: a nearly head-on presentation you kick across a...	.miz	brief
03	Medium TA — Turn to Bandit Recip Medium target aspect: turn to the bandit's reciprocal and manage the drift. 20 TA left a...	.miz	brief
04	High TA — Place on Collision High aspect: put him on collision bearing and hold it. A cloud layer now sits inside the ...	.miz	brief

The AWI Basics card and its twelve events.

The Builder

ERA

Hard-filters maps, aircraft, statics and air defenses to the period.

World War II (1939-1946)

Cold War (1965-1985)

Modern (2000s+)

War on Terror (2003-2020)

MISSION

What kind of sortie is this? It sets the theater up for you — you can change anything afterwards.

Open tasking
 A living theater, nothing assigned

Air-to-air
 Enemy fighters up on the threat axis

Strike
 Targets in the enemy rear, defended

Close air support
 Low, in the guns, over the target

SEAD
 Hunt the radars first

Carrier ops
 Needs a carrier-capable jet and a coastal map

Training
 Range work with the threats turned down

Pick one and this line will tell you exactly what it changed.

MAP

Caucasus
Free terrain

The Channel
Paid terrain

Persian Gulf
Paid terrain

Nevada (NTTR)
Paid terrain

Normandy 2
Paid terrain

Syria
Paid terrain

Sinai
Paid terrain

Marianas
Free terrain

Cold War Germany
Paid terrain

Kola
Paid terrain

South Atlantic
Paid terrain

Afghanistan
Paid terrain

Iraq
Paid terrain

AIR CORRIDORS

open theater — 1 lanes available Hide v

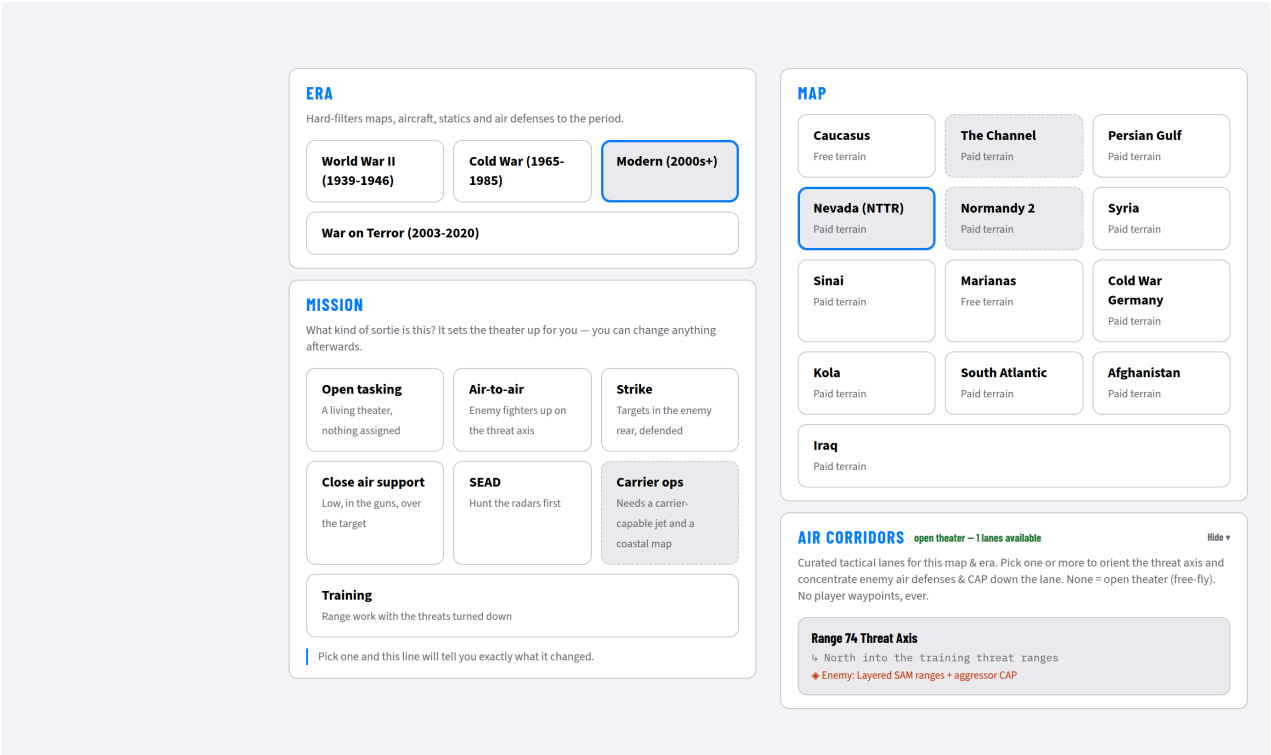
Curated tactical lanes for this map & era. Pick one or more to orient the threat axis and concentrate enemy air defenses & CAP down the lane. None = open theater (free-fly). No player waypoints, ever.

Range 74 Threat Axis
 ↖ North into the training threat ranges
 ♦ Enemy: Layered SAM ranges + aggressor CAP

The Builder: rail navigation, live values, Generate always in reach.

Finding your way

The app works as a set of **focused screens**, not one long page. The **rail** on the left lists the mission's areas — click any one to switch to it, and you see just that screen. Each rail item shows its current value and turns green with a ✓ once set, so you can tell at a glance what's done. A **Next** button (with Back and a "Step N of M" readout) walks you through in order if you'd rather be guided. The live **PREVIEW** line and the **GENERATE** button are pinned at the bottom of every screen, so you can build the moment you're happy — there is no required order, and changing one thing and regenerating is always two clicks. Your work saves itself: close the browser mid-build and everything is exactly where you left it ("Reset wizard" starts fresh).



Section navigation: the rail switches screens, completion checkmarks show progress, and Generate + the live preview stay pinned.

Screen by screen

1 • Theater — era and map

Start with **when**, then **where**. The era is the master filter: it decides which maps, aircraft, statics, SAMs, and support can appear — a WWII starter never offers a Hornet, a modern one never a Spitfire. Maps without content for the era gray out. All eleven theaters are here: pick WWII and the Channel, Normandy and the 1944 Marianas light up; Cold War Germany puts you on the Inner German Border; Kola covers NATO's Northern Flank; Sinai in the Cold War is October 1973. Each preset carries its major airfields on both sides — on the NTTR that includes Groom Lake and Tonopah Test Range as blue home plates (USAF fields; even the captured MiGs there flew as USAF units).

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Cold War Germany
Paid terrain

Kola
Paid terrain

South Atlantic
Paid terrain

Afghanistan
Paid terrain

Iraq
Paid terrain

AIR CORRIDORS

open theater — 1 lanes available Hide ▾

Curated tactical lanes for this map & era. Pick one or more to orient the threat axis and concentrate enemy air defenses & CAP down the lane. None = open theater (free-fly). No player waypoints, ever.

Range 74 Threat Axis

↳ North into the training threat ranges

◆ Enemy: Layered SAM ranges + aggressor CAP

Theater: era across the top, then the maps valid for it.

Airspace you don't get to use

Every Nevada mission draws **R-4808N** — the Groom Lake box — on the F10 map, with the data panel a sectional prints for it: surface to unlimited, continuous, not joint-use. There is no controlling agency to ask, because nobody is getting in. The Box is off-limits even during Red Flag; crews are briefed that entering it, or loitering on the boundary looking in, ends careers. It appears whether or not you turn on historical airspace, because leaving it off a Nellis chart would be a lie.

2 • Scenario — a ready-made mission, or build your own

Right after you've set the theater, the **Scenario** step offers ready-made missions that fit this map and era — pick one and it fills the rest of the wizard for you, which you can then tweak on any screen. Choose **Carrier Qualification** or **ACLS Practice** and the boat, deck state, tanker and a calm threat picture drop into place; choose **SEAD / Wild Weasel Range** and a heavy SAM belt with AWACS and a tanker are set up for you; **CAP / Alert-5** stands up an enemy air picture to intercept. Only scenarios valid for your theater appear — carrier scenarios stay hidden on a landlocked map, modern-only ones vanish in WWII. Each writes its **suggested tasking into the briefing** (targets and the threat picture) — never forced waypoints, so the Starter principle holds. Prefer to configure everything yourself? Leave it on **Build your own**. The F-14 **Crew Ops** scenarios also live here (see that section).

3 • Flight — side, jet, home base

Pick your side, home airfield, and aircraft from the full DCS flyable roster (period-filtered), plus single- or multiplayer slots, start type, time, weather, and world density. On coastal maps **the carrier** is offered here as a home base (last in the list); land bases are the default, so choosing the boat is a deliberate act — and doing so lights up the Carrier screen.

Your flight callsign

Every flight gets a **real squadron radio callsign**, chosen for the airframe you picked. Take the Tomcat: the F-14A flies as **Gypsy** — VF-32's call, the one heard on the tape when Gypsy 202 and 207 splashed two MiG-23s over the Gulf of Sidra in 1989 — while the F-14B flies as **Victory**, the Jolly Rogers of VF-103. The Hornet is **Chippy** (VFA-195), the Harrier **Blacksheep** (VMA-214), the Viper **Basher**, the Phantom **Oyster** (555th TFS, 10 May 1972), and the Hun **Misty**, after the FACs who flew it. Red-side jets use proper bort numbers instead. The field shows the default and where it comes from; type anything you like over it and the whole mission follows — group name, comms card, briefing, kneeboard.

Variations & the seed

The **Variation (seed)** field is the one control people find mysterious, so here's the whole story: the generator makes hundreds of small random choices — which stands get aircraft, where the area SAMs sit, exactly where the tanker orbits. The **seed** is the number those choices are rolled from. **The same recipe and the same seed always build the exact same mission**, byte for byte — that's how a share link reproduces your mission precisely for a squadron-mate. If you like a mission but want to tweak one setting, keep the seed so everything else stays put. If you want a different layout of the same scenario, change the number — or just hit the **re-roll re-roll** button next to it — and generate again. You never have to think about the actual value; treat re-roll as "give me another version."

4 • Airfields — populate your ramps

Fill your side's fields with parked aircraft, ground equipment and infrastructure. There are two ways to do it, chosen with the toggle at the top of the screen.

Two ways to fill

Ramp theme auto-fills a curated, era- and base-correct mix — Nellis dresses as an Air Force base, not a Navy ramp — at a **fill percentage** you set. This is the quick path: pick a theme (or leave it on Auto) and go.

How to fill your ramps

☒ **Ramp theme** — a curated mix, auto-filled ☐ **Compose** — pick exact aircraft & counts

Ramp theme — who parks on YOUR fields (era-filtered)

Auto (era default)

Picks the right ramp for the map — e.g. US Air Force at Nellis, no Navy paint.

Fill: **45%** of fillable parking stands (exact — this share of each field's stands gets a parked aircraft. Facing vs. performance is the placement mode below.)

The toggle picks how ramps are filled; in theme mode you get a theme dropdown and a fill slider.

Compose exact aircraft

Switch to **Compose** for the Ramp Composer, where you pick exact aircraft and counts by role — Fighters, Bombers & Heavies, Tankers, AWACS, Transport, Helicopters — with your own coalition and Red/OPFOR aggressors in separate, color-coded sections. It starts **pre-populated from the selected theme**: pick Red Flag and you get Vipers, Eagles, a Tornado, a pair of B-1s, tankers and an AWACS already laid in — adjust the numbers from there. Counts are **per airfield**, era-filtered (a WWII composer offers warbirds, never a B-1), and placement is stand-aware: helos on pads, heavies on the big ramp squares, anything beyond a field's capacity skipped. The exact mix rides the share link, so a squadron-mate who clicks it gets the same ramp.

Your coalition — Blue

FIGHTERS & ATTACK



The Ramp Composer, pre-populated from the Red Flag template — your coalition and Red aggressors listed separately (scrolls for more categories).

Placement mode & object types

Placement mode matters for performance. **Static objects** (recommended) are inert scenery — no AI pilot, so they use far less memory and CPU, load instantly, and never show as map contacts; their facing is **exact** on the surveyed maps (all but Falklands and The Channel). **AI aircraft** align to the painted line on any map but are live units that cost frames and can hurt FPS on lower-end PCs — only worth it on the two unsurveyed maps. The three checkboxes switch parked aircraft, ground equipment and the infrastructure cluster independently. Runways and taxiways always stay clear, and enemy fields dress themselves with their own era-correct theme.

Parked-aircraft placement

Static objects (recommended) — inert, low memory, exact facing on survey

Livery style — how parked aircraft are painted

Squadron mix (recommended) — real nation-correct schemes

Parked statics currently wear **DCS stock skins**. The curated nation-correct pack ships unverified — its livery names are guesses, and a name DCS doesn't recognise gives you a wrong or blank aircraft rather than the default one, so the engine doesn't write them. Run `scripts/dump_liveries.py --merge` once against your install to read the real names (including paid ones) and this control takes effect.

Tankers, AWACS & transports on the ramp

Normal (recommended) — a working ramp

Big aircraft need big stands, and the fighter squadrons will take every one of them if nothing holds a few back. Set this to **Exercise surge** for a Red Flag look at Nellis. Small fields scale down on their own.

☒ Parked aircraft ☒ Ground equipment (fuel & utility trucks by occupied stands) ☒ Infrastructure (fuel farm, tents, barracks off the ramp)

Placement mode (Static is recommended for performance) and the object-type toggles.

5 • Threats — defenses and the Threat Dial

Turn on **Air defenses** (era-correct SAM sites + SHORAD at every enemy field), then set the **Threat Dial**. **Intensity** (Minimal → Maximum) adds extra area SAM sites and airborne enemy CAP on top of the base defenses — the count is rolled off the seed, so re-rolls differ. **System level** sets the calibre: Era standard, Light (SA-2/3, MiG-21/23), Heavy (SA-10/11, Su-27/MiG-31), Mixed, or **Guns only** — zero radar SAMs anywhere,

replaced by denser AAA clusters (23/57/100 mm) with gun batteries defending every strike target: the Rolling Thunder picture, no launch warnings. Everything is era-gated — a WWII field never fields an SA-10. The enemy CAP engages you inbound; the area belt is yours to plan around.

THREATS

Pick how hard the mission pushes back. Everything below is the manual override.

Sandbox
 Nothing shoots back. Targets in the enemy rear to practice on.

Light
 A token CAP and older SAMs. Room to make mistakes.

Standard
 Period-correct defenses at normal density.

Contested
 Layered belts and heavy CAP. Bring a plan.

Fine tuning

☒ **Air defenses**
 Complete era-correct SAM sites + SHORAD

Intensity: **Moderate** (how many extra area SAMs & enemy CAP flights spawn between the lines — count is randomized off the seed, so re-rolls feel different)

1 Minimal · 2 Light · 3 Moderate · 4 Heavy · 5 Maximum

On top of the SAM defending each enemy airfield, the dial adds an area SAM belt and airborne enemy CAP on the threat axis. **Guns only** swaps every SAM for AAA clusters — 23/57/100mm, no launch warnings. Everything is era-gated — a WWII field never fields an SA-10. Needs **Air defenses** (building blocks) on.

System level

Era standard — historical mix

Threats: air defenses plus the intensity dial and system-level tiers.

6 • Support & extras

On-station assets and briefing aids, grouped by what they do: **air support** (tanker, AWACS, ambient traffic, FARP), **targets & ranges** (strike packages, a practice range), and **briefing aids** (the comms card, in-jet kneeboards, named nav reference points). Turn on what the mission needs — sensible defaults are already set.

The **tanker matches your jet**: a boom receiver (F-16, F-15, A-10) gets a KC-135; a probe-and-drogue jet (Hornet, Tomcat, Mirage) gets a drogue tanker. Support aircraft fly under a nation that actually operates them (US AWACS/tankers, Russian A-50), added to your coalition if your lead nation doesn't — so an Israeli- or UK-led force still gets a valid, editable KC-135 and E-3 rather than an airframe its country can't fly.

7 • Carrier (when the carrier is home)

Shown only when you chose the carrier as your home base. Pick a hull, a real-world deck state (recovery, launch, underway, packed), the aircraft spotted on deck, and optionally launch the air wing's CAP and Hawkeye. All approach systems come pre-activated.

COALITION & BASING

Who's flying

Just me
Single player. Fly it solo, offline.

2-ship
You + 1 client seat, same airframe. Host it in multiplayer.

3-ship
You + 2 client seats, same airframe. Host it in multiplayer.

4-ship
You + 3 client seats, same airframe. Host it in multiplayer.

Mixed flight
Different aircraft in one flight — not yet

Your side Blue

Home airbase The carrier (start on the boat)

Aircraft (full DCS roster) FA-18C · Hornet

Flight callsign Chippy

Chippy — VFA-195 Dambusters · DCS's radio speaks only Enfield, Springfield, Uzi, Colt, Dodge, Ford, Chevy, Pontiac; "Chippy" is mapped to one of them and kept in the brief as the squadron's own.

Start cold Time day Weather clear Density normal Variation (seed) 1

Variation (seed) — the same seed always builds the **exact same mission** (that's how a share link reproduces it precisely). Keep it to fine-tune the same layout; change it or hit to re-roll a different spread of parked aircraft, threats and support.

Your loadout

How much to carry

☒ Arm my aircraft for the mission Standard (recommended)

Your jet is fitted for the **mission type** you picked — air-to-air gets missiles, strike gets bombs and a targeting pod, SEAD gets anti-radiation missiles, and every fit keeps a pair of air-to-air missiles for self-defense. Everything chosen is checked against what DCS actually allows on that station and against the year, so nothing turns up that the aircraft can't carry or that hadn't been invented yet. Untick to spawn with empty pylons and set it yourself in the Mission Editor.

Your field

☐ **Aircraft in the pattern**
A few AI aircraft recovering or departing at YOUR field as the mission starts — pick the leg, the type and how many

Carrier

☒ **Carrier strike group**
CVN + escorts on BRC, TACAN 71X / ICLS 11 / Link4 (blue, coastal maps)

CARRIER DECK CONFIGURATION

Hull CVN-71 Theodore Roosevelt (CSG-9) — Supercarrier

Deck layout (real-world states) Underway — cruise deck, light park aft of the island

Aircraft on deck

☒ FA-18C-hornet parked on deck

☒ F-14B parked on deck

☒ E-2C parked on deck

☒ S-3B parked on deck

☒ SH-60B parked on deck

☒ **Deck equipment**
Tugs, MJ-1 loaders, crash & salvage gear at real stations

☐ **Launch CAP**
Air-wing 2-ship on station toward the threat axis

☐ **Launch Hawkeye (AAW)**
Air-wing E-2 AEW orbit covering the strike group

☐ **Launch strike package**
Air-wing A-6 Intruders outbound on the threat axis — you escort (Cold War air wings)

Carrier deck configuration — hull, deck state, air wing.

8 • Map & graphics (F10)

Each layer draws real mission geometry on the F10 map: the tanker's racetrack with its freq/TACAN label, the AWACS orbit, carrier CAP and Hawkeye stations, the strike group's ops box, amber rings over targets and the

range, FARP service rings, bullseye, and the intel picture — known enemy SAM rings at doctrinal radii. Friendly orbits and threat rings render on YOUR coalition's layer only, so multiplayer stays fair. Zones inform — they never route you.

9 · Review & generate

A one-glance summary of every choice. Hit **GENERATE .MIZ** (here or from the pinned bar on any screen), drop the file in Saved Games/DCS/Missions/, and fly — or open it in the Mission Editor and keep building. **Copy share link** gives a URL that regenerates this exact starter for anyone who clicks it; paste it in your squadron Discord.

REVIEW

One glance, then build. Any rail item jumps you back to tweak.

01 MISSION

Modern (2000s+) · Nevada (NTTR)



02 FLIGHT

blue · Just me · FA-18C · Nellis



03 OPPOSITION

Moderate · Era standard



04 AIRFIELDS

US Air Force · 45% fill



05 SUPPORT &
PRESENTATION

Tanker · AWACS · Ambient traffic +4



GENERATE .MIZ

Copy share link

Review & generate: the full picture before you build.

Crew Ops – fly the back seat

The backseat contract: the mission flies the jet; you run the mission. Crew Ops templates are player-paced through the **F10 CREW menu** — no scripts on a stopwatch. Commands appear as they become relevant, the AI crew answers your calls, and real events drive the feedback (“GOOD EFFECT ON TARGET” when your convoy dies).

- **F-14B(U) Pilot + Jester: IZLID Strike** — you fly the Tomcat; Jester (the AI RIO) puts the IZLID on the target when you call it from the crew menu. (Pre-release module.)
- **F-14B(U) RIO + Iceman: GCI Intercept** — you're the RIO; Iceman (the AI pilot) flies YOUR calls — commit, hold, recommit CAP — while you run the AWG-9. (Pre-release.)
- **RIO: Fleet Defense (F-14, solo or multiplayer)** — four Backfires inbound on the force; sort the raid in TWS and time the Phoenix shots. **Solo** (1 slot): you air-start level on CAP — trim, jump to the back seat, and Iceman holds the jet on your A-menu commands. **Multiplayer** (2 slots): human pilot up front, human RIO in back.

Crew difficulty: Trainee shows [CREW HINT] prompts for the next call; Qualified gives you a clean cockpit. **Why F-14 only?** Jester and Iceman are the Tomcat's crew AI. The F-4E needs none — the Phantom's back seat has full flight controls, so a WSO player simply flies from the pit.

Nav reference points

On maps with curated landmark data (Nevada today), named references — Area 51, Belted Peak, Student Gap, Coyote Summit and more — are marked on the **F10 map**, listed in the briefing with coordinates, plotted on the kneeboard theater page, and provided as named trigger zones (NAV BELTED PEAK) you can build your own logic on.

The standard comm ladder

Every starter uses the same predefined comms, so you learn the plan once. All agency frequencies sit on the real 25 kHz radio channel raster (they end on realistic .025 increments, not round whole numbers), and Guard stays fixed at 243.000. The ladder is printed on the in-jet kneeboard and in the mission briefing.

AGENCY	CALLSIGN	FREQ (UHF)	CHAN	TACAN	NOTES
Guard	—	243.000	last	—	monitored (fixed emergency)
Your flight	(varies)	305.725	CH1	—	flight common
Tactical	—	254.325	CH7	—	inter-flight coordination
AWACS	Overlord	251.475	CH3	—	land-based E-3 / A-50
Tanker	Texaco	253.625	CH4	39Y	speeds & altitudes per type
Carrier	(her callsign)	264.425	CH2	hull # X	ICLS 11 · Link4 336 · ACLS
Plane guard	Angel	262.050	CH5	—	Starboard Delta, flight ops
CAP	(squadron)	258.175	CH6	—	carrier air wing
AEW Hawkeye	(squadron)	259.925	CH3/8	—	CH3 if no AWACS in mission
FARPs	(name)	127.525+	—	—	0.25 steps per pad

The comm plan is already in your jet. COMM1 presets are programmed to this ladder at generation time (only for assets that exist in your mission) — Mother is CH2, gas is CH4, Guard rides the last channel. COMM2 keeps module defaults. The kneeboard's CHAN column matches the cockpit.

Carrier systems activate at mission start per hull, and every boat answers to her real name: **Rough Rider** (CVN-71), **Union** (CVN-72), **Warfighter** (CVN-73), **Courage** (CVN-74), **Lone Warrior** (CVN-75) — official voice callsigns per ACP 113. The Forrestal flies her fleet nickname **Fid** (“First In Defense”, convention). “Mother” still works — it's the brevity word for whichever boat is yours. **TACAN channel = hull number**: 73X on the George Washington, 59X on the Forrestal, 5X on Invincible (pennant R05). SuperCarrier boats also radiate ICLS 11, Link4 336 and ACLS; the Forrestal has no ACLS in DCS; the 1982 Invincible is TACAN-only; the 1944 Essex is visual recovery, era-true.

Aircraft-side TACAN/ICLS/Link4 are cockpit state — DCS does not allow presetting them from a mission file; the kneeboard values are what you dial (F-14 crews: the RIO enters Link4 336.0).

Building blocks

BLOCK	WHAT YOU GET
Airfield dressing	Era- and faction-correct static aircraft on real parking stands, ground support equipment, fuel farms, tents, comms to
Air defenses	Complete, functional SAM sites with doctrinal layouts — SA-2/3/6/11, Hawk, Patriot by era and side — plus SHORAD a
Tanker / AWACS	On station behind friendly lines on the standard freqs. Not available in WWII — the era gate is strict.
Carrier strike group	A real CSG with a doctrine-spotted deck. See the next section.
Ambient air traffic	AI transports starting up and flying between friendly fields.
Functional FARPs	Pads with the fuel, ammo, command, and comms vehicles required for rearm and refuel to actually work.
Strike targets	Depot, convoy, and C2 packages in the enemy rear — each with a trigger zone ready for your own mission logic.
Practice range	Bombing ring and strafe line in the friendly rear.
Nav kneeboard	Comms card, airfield data, and a theater overview rendered into the jet's kneeboard.
Nav reference points	Named landmarks (Area 51, Belted Peak...) marked on the F10 map, in the briefing, and on the kneeboard, with trigge

The carrier strike group

Pick a hull and you get its **real strike group**. The Roosevelt sails as CSG-9 with USS Lake Erie (CG-70) and DESRON 23 destroyers; the Truman as CSG-8 with USS Gettysburg; the Forrestal as a 1980s Mediterranean battle group with USS Ticonderoga; HMS Invincible as the 1982 South Atlantic task force with her Leander frigates (and, true to history, no AEW); USS Essex as Task Force 58 with Corsairs for the 1944 Marianas. Screen stations follow doctrine: plane-guard destroyer astern, AAW cruiser on the beam, pickets on the bow quarters. The group steams into wind on BRC. On landlocked maps (Nevada) the carrier option grays out — there is no carrier water.

When the deck is set for flight ops (launch or recovery), the air wing's SAR helo is already airborne — **Angel**, an SH-60 holding in **Starboard Delta**: 300 ft and below, a quarter mile off the starboard beam, tracking the ship's course. Starboard, because the whole Case I pattern lives in left-hand turns on the port side; doctrine is "first off, last on" — the helo launches before the first cat shot. Each wing flies its real HS squadron (HS-6 Indians on the Roosevelt, HS-15 Red Lions on the Forrestal), up Angel common on 262.0. The 1944 Essex keeps her plane-guard destroyer astern instead — no helos in Task Force 58.

Deck configuration

DECK STATE	WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE
Recovery	Landing area clear (angle, waist cats, EL4, port stern). The bow is the pack: tight uniform herringbone rows across the cat tr
Launch	Cats, JBDs, and taxi flow clear; spares spotted aft in uniform rows.
Packed	Port-visit deck. Everything fouled including the angle. No-fly.

Check the aircraft types you want on deck — rows are spotted one squadron per row, with tugs, MJ-1 loaders, and crash gear at their real stations. Optionally launch the air wing's **CAP** (two-ship on the threat axis at 25,000 ft — e.g. VFA-146 Blue Diamonds) and an **E-2 Hawkeye** AEW orbit covering the force.

Scenario templates keep the no-waypoints rule: they preset the world and write suggested tasking into the briefing, never your flight plan. Three exceptions, all deliberate: the F-14 Crew Ops scenarios (the AI pilot needs steerpoints to fly), the curated training rides whose printed syllabus IS the flight plan (the White Knights rides carry the squadron's own route, because the route is the lesson), and the **Automatic waypoints** tickbox on the Targets screen, which is off until you switch it on and then builds WP1 → IP → TARGET → home with a kneeboard leg card. There is no waypoint editor — where a mission needs a plan, the mission brings it. See the Crew Ops section.

Share links and recipes

A starter is defined by its **recipe** — your wizard selections plus a seed. Share links encode the recipe, not the file: the same link always regenerates the same mission, even after DCS updates. Change the seed to reroll the details while keeping your selections.

FAQ

What do you track about me? Nothing about you. When a mission is built we count the mission's shape — map, era, aircraft, mission type, which door it came through — so we know what to build next. No IP address, no account, no identifier of any kind; the record has no field one could go in.

The mission won't load or units are missing. Make sure you own the map. Carrier decks with CVN-71/72/73/75 need the Supercarrier module; the Stennis deck works in the base game, and the Forrestal comes with the F-14.

Can I edit the starter? Yes — that's the point. Open it in the Mission Editor; everything is ordinary groups and statics you can move, delete, or build on.

Why can't I pick aircraft X in era Y? Hard era gate by service window — the Hornet entered service in 1987, so it can't appear in a Cold War (1965–1985) starter. This keeps every starter period-authentic.